



Looking after our children's wellbeing at Paget...

-Newsletter 13-

Hi there,

I'm sure everyone is looking forward to the Summer break, the chance to spend quality time with our little ones and loved ones. For many of us, the holidays means a welcome break from the daily grind of getting up and ready for school.

But for many others, the time away can give way to worry.

- Summer holiday help!-

When the school year takes a pause, underlying issues in kids can progress. And without regular check-ins from adults, these issues can go unnoticed.

So how can parents check up on their children's mental health during summer break?

Summer presents an opportunity to reconnect with your child and learn more about what is going on in his or her life.

Here are five tips for checking up on a child's mental well-being:

1. **Find an activity you could do together.** Even if it's something small, like a walk after dinner, these can be great opportunities for your child to open up to you.
2. **Maintain routine or structure.** While summer may be a nice time away from academic expectations and it is natural to spend more time relaxing, it is helpful to still maintain some structure throughout the days and weeks as well as to engage in a variety of activities.
3. **Monitor overall patterns of behaviour.** Many kids enjoy sleeping in during the holidays. If that doesn't interfere with getting to activities on time or engaging with friends and hobbies, it's likely not an issue. However, if your child sleeps for much of the day, avoids engaging with others, and also appears to be down or irritable much of the time, this is more cause for concern.
4. **Watch for avoidance of or anxiety in certain types of activities or situations.** When someone is struggling, they often avoid or disengage from things they used to do. While you may see decreases in some activities, there are often increases in other more solitary and sedentary activities, such as sleep, playing video games, watching TV, or reading.

5. **Signs of distress.** "This can include tearfulness, irritability, restlessness, and comments indicating a negative view of themselves, hopelessness, or excessive worry about negative outcomes in the future.



Be Proactive! What can you do to preserve your child's mental health?

Create a routine. Children behave best with general structure and order. Consider establishing wake and sleep times, meal times, and expected activities for your child. Routines create regularity and stability, thus children tend to function better when they know what to expect and what is expected of them. To help with organization, consider creating visual cues to remind your child what to expect throughout the day.

Keep your child active. During the school year, children participate in physical education, recess, and extracurricular activities. These activities provide children with important social interaction and physical exercise that is critical for healthy development. Consider taking your child to the park, riding a bike, or playing a game of catch. An active lifestyle helps relieve stress and can improve your child's mental health.

Encourage and support your child's interests. When your child finds something that appeals to her or him, it is important to nurture and support it. Parental support and encouragement could promote lifelong hobbies and cultivate natural talents. This will also give you something special to bond over with your child.

Talk to your child. Ask your child how he or she is feeling. Creating a family culture of open dialogue will help develop and strengthen your child's communication skills. There may be unspoken anxieties about meeting new children at summer camp, an upcoming flight on an airplane, or any number of future events. It is important that your child knows he or she can talk to you about his or her state of mind. This will also teach your child how to recognize his or her own feelings and mental health needs as they mature.

Practice self-care. It's important for you as a parent to monitor your own mental health. Your child deserves the best version of you, so take care of yourself. If you find yourself feeling anxious, try to find healthy ways to reduce stress and focus on positivity. Consider going for a walk, taking a bubble bath, or meditating. Finding a positive stress reliever will not only help you but also set a good example for your child.

-A reminder of places to go to for support and advice online and local resources for summer support-



This website from the NHS offers expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your child's mental health and wellbeing as well as the rest of the family. <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mindmatters/>



The NSPCC are offering support and advice if you feel your child is struggling with their mental health and anxiety due to the coronavirus. More information and advice can be found on their website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-childrenfamilies-parents>



Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

The BBC Newsround site has a comprehensive section on coronavirus with text and video guidance focusing on tips if a child is worried, how to wash your hands, and what self-isolation means: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456>



Pause.



Need someone to talk to?
Struggling to cope with feelings?
We're here for you.

We are operating a telephone-based service while Pause in Digbeth is closed.
Register for support via our website:
www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/services/13-pause

Or call 0207 841 4470 and we will arrange for one of our friendly staff to call you back.

Who can use us?

You can use us if you have a Birmingham GP and are:

- Under 25 years old (If you are under 14 you will need to have a parent / caregiver with you when we call to give consent).
- Or if you are a parent / caregiver looking for support for their child who is under 25 years old.

How can we help?

We can offer:

- Self-help strategies, skills for managing difficult situations and feelings.
- A non-judgemental listening ear.
- Details for other organisations that might also be able to help you.
- Each call lasts around 20-30 minutes which focuses on ways forward.

Our Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday: 10am-6pm, Saturdays: 10am-5pm.
We are closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.



-Final note-

Wellbeing referral

Should you feel that you or your child requires any additional support, your child's class teacher should be your first contact point. If this is not possible please feel free to contact the school Pastoral team, Miss Spiers or Miss Green, or our Paget Mental Health and Wellbeing lead, Mrs Ewbank for support. We are always here to listen. There will be things we can do to further support you.

Please share any ideas you have of your children looking after their mental health on our twitter @pagetprimary and use the hashtag #pagetwellbeing

Stay safe in both body and mind

Mrs Ewbank

SEMH and Wellbeing Lead